

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. ____

Introduced by: Porter

A HOUSE RESOLUTION recognizing the importance of early and optimal oral health care to a child's ability to learn.

Whereas, students with preventable or untreated health and development problems may have trouble concentrating and learning, have frequent absences from school, or can even develop permanent disabilities that can affect their ability to learn and grow; and

Whereas, nationally, 51 million school hours per year are lost due to dental related illnesses; and

Whereas, poor oral health care significantly impacts a child's ability to learn, results in decreased performance in school, leads to reduced self-esteem, and ultimately lessens the potential for success in the workforce; and

Whereas, poor oral health care can contribute to other complicating health factors, such as diabetes, respiratory disease and low birth weight babies; and



Whereas, periodontal disease, or a low-grade infection in the mouth, has been linked to systemic illnesses such as cardiovascular diseases, respiratory ailments, and poor pregnancy outcomes; and

Whereas, children and adolescents of some racial and ethnic groups and those with lower incomes experience higher rates of untreated decay; and

Whereas, African American and Hispanic children have about three times higher rates of untreated decay and missing teeth because of tooth decay, but are about one-third as likely to receive dental sealants. Forty percent of Hispanic-American children aged six (6) to eight (8) years have untreated decay, compared with 25% of non-Hispanic whites; and

Whereas, children from families with low incomes had nearly 12 times as many restricted activity days because of dental problems as children from families with higher incomes; and

Whereas, efforts to disseminate information and improve awareness about proper oral health care in schools can be very effective in preventing oral diseases; and

Whereas, information on early childhood care can help parents prevent harm to their infant's teeth; and

Whereas, knowledge of proper brushing and flossing techniques along with good nutritional habits can help children toward a lifetime of sound oral health; and

Whereas, studies show that children who receive dental sealants as part of a school-based or school-linked program have 60% fewer newly decayed teeth compared with children who are not in such school programs; and

Whereas, the Centers for Disease Control is committed to helping states strengthen their oral health programs by promoting oral health education in communities, schools, and



health care setting nationwide; therefore

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the
General Assembly of the State of Indiana:

SECTION 1. The Indiana General Assembly recognizes the critical link between early and optimal oral health care and education and it supports efforts to improve the state of children's oral health through awareness programs and school-based efforts.

SECTION 2. The Indiana General Assembly encourages the study of "dental homes" whereby collaborative outreach and educational efforts with dental providers and community leaders in under-served communities would be established to provide children with early and optimal oral health care services.

SECTION 3. The Indiana General Assembly wants to see the practicality of partnerships among universities, government entities, and the private sector to foster and maintain valuable opportunities to promote oral health awareness and related programs in educational and community-based settings.

SECTION 4. The Indiana General Assembly encourages schools to consider school-based oral health services to make preventative services, such as fluoride and dental sealants, accessible to all children, especially those with lower incomes, and to consider school dental health programs, particularly in elementary schools, designed to train children in the skills and importance of personal dental care.

SECTION 5. The Indiana General Assembly encourages schools to continue to promote proper oral hygiene at early ages, such as incorporating oral health in school nurse education programs and training, as well as providing time for children to brush and care for their teeth.

SECTION 6. The Indiana General Assembly values the input of those with a commitment to the overall dental health of Indiana's children and commits to the development of and reporting on efforts described in this Resolution to promote educational activities aimed at parents and children regarding proper oral health care and its link to a



child's ability to learn.

SECTION 7. In conjunction with the American Dental Association's designation of February as National Children's Dental Health Month, the Indiana General Assembly hereby encourages the governor of the state of Indiana to name the month of February as Children's Dental Health Month.

